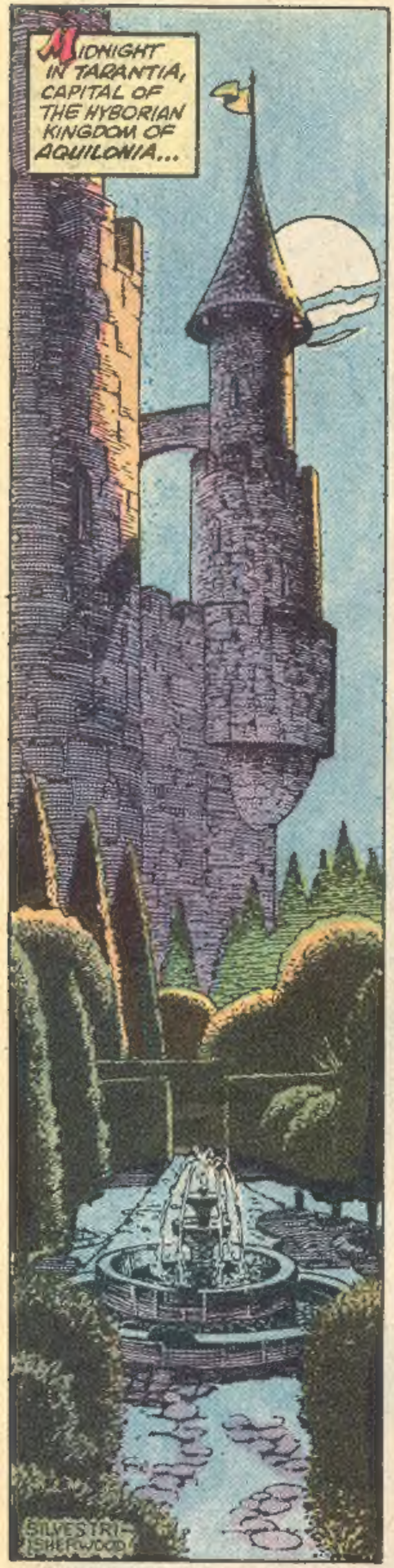
MARVEL
CONAN THE KING
$1.00
25
NOV
02480
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY



CONAN THE KING ™ Vol. 1, No. 25, November, 1984. (U.S.P.S. 589-610) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. **SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.** Published bi-monthly. Copyright © 1984 by Conan Properties, Inc. The advertising and editorial material appearing on pages 5, 7, 10 12, 21, 23, 26, 28, 31, 32, covers 2, 3, and 4 only, copyright © 1984 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price $1.00 per copy in the U.S. and $1.25 in Canada. Subscription rate $12.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $14.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO CONAN THE KING, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**

SNAP T!

THE CLOAK OF THE NIGHT--

--IS THE MANTLE OF LOVERS

RADEGUND!

OF COURSE MY HANDSOME DRAGON. ONCE AGAIN I'VE MANAGED TO ELUDE THOSE DETERMINED LEGIONNAIRES MOTHER'S SENT TO GUARD ME...

BUT AT WHAT *RISK*...? JUST WEEKS AGO HROLF SAID "LEONIDAS... YOU'RE JUGGLING HOT COALS THERE, LAD!"

DON'T BE SILLY, *LEONIDAS*, YOU ARE A BLACK DRAGON-- THE DEADLIEST, MOST FEARSOME OF MY FATHER'S LEGIONNAIRES,

NOW YOU TELL ME-- WHAT *SAFER* PLACE CAN THERE BE...

...FOR THE *DAUGHTER* OF THE *KING!*

MEANWHILE, WITHIN THE CASTLE...

THE HOUR'S PAST MIDNIGHT, CONAN, AND YOU'VE AN EARLY RISE TOMORROW.

BARON MALORIC EXPECTS YOU AND RADEGUND WITHIN THE WEEK.

"IT'S TIME OUR DAUGHTER MET BARON MALORIC'S SON PEPIN... TO WHOM SHE'S BEEN BETROTHED FROM BIRTH."

"CROM! GIVE ME A GOOD MORNING'S HUNT INSTEAD OF THIS TRAIPSING ON YET ANOTHER STATE VISIT, ZENOBIA."

'TIS YOUR DUTY AS HER FATHER TO ESCORT RADEGUND TO MEET THIS PEPIN, MY HUSBAND...

... FOR, BY LAW THEY'VE BEEN FORBIDDEN TO BE INTRODUCED UNTIL THEY REACHED THE PROPER AGE.

HRMPH.

"HOW STRANGE IT SEEMS, THE WAY MARRIAGES ARE ARRANGED AND DECREED FOR ROYAL CHILDREN... HOW DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY WE FELL IN LOVE, CONAN.

"STILL, THIS PEPIN SOUNDS LIKE A NICE ENOUGH BOY.

"I HOPE HE PLEASES HER."

HE'D BETTER PLEASE ME.

COME NOW, MY LOVE, I'VE BID MY HANDMAID DRAPE OUR BED THIS NIGHT WITH SHEETS OF KHITAN SILK.

YOU ARE DROWSY, ZENOBIA.

GO ON WITHOUT ME.

I'D YET WALK THE CASTLE BEFORE I SLEEP.

HOW I DREAD VISITING BARON MALORIC.

TO THINK THAT MY PARENTS TRULY BELIEVE I'LL ALLOW THIS STRANGER *PEPIN* TO COURT ME AND BECOME MY... MY *HUSBAND*

THERE'S NO HARM IN YOUR *MEETING* HIM FOR NOW...

I SUPPOSE... YET MARRIAGE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. LIFE WITHOUT LOVE...

"... WOULD BE SO LONELY."

AT THAT MOMENT, IN CANTRIUM, THE BARONY OF MALORIC TO THE NORTH, A LONE KNIGHT RIDES...

THERE'S OUR QUARRY.

HAIEE!

WHAT... HIGHWAYMEN?! MY BROADSWORD WILL BRAIN YOU THIEVING SCUM!

YOU DISHONOR US, PALESKINNED DOG-- FOR WE ARE PROFESSIONAL DEALERS OF DEATH...

THUD!

NOT COMMON THIEVES.

COME, WE'VE EARNED THIS NIGHT'S PURSE.

TOMORROW'S PATRON IS THE BARON MALORIC, WHO PROMISES A FORTUNE IN GOLD.

IT SEEMS THE KING COMES TO CANTRIUM...

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

ATTACK!

WELL, COUNT TROCERO, HERE IS YET ANOTHER ROYAL BORE OF A RECEPTION FOR YOU TO WALLOW ABOUT IN.

VERY WELL, THEN, DIPLOMAT. I'LL KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT, YOU GET ME THROUGH THIS AS SWIFTLY AS POSSIBLE.

THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID, MY LORD, OF DIPLOMACY... ...AND DIPLOMATS.

KING CONAN--WELCOME TO MY ESTATES.

MALORIC.

MAY I PRESENT MY WIFE LADUNIA.

I'M HONORED, LORD KING.

MY KING IS MY GLORY AND MY PASSION, MOST WORTHY LIEGE. IT IS MY PRIVILEGE AND HONOR TO PLAY THE MOON TO YOUR RADIANT SUN.

AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE SPARED NO EXPENSE TO MAKE YOUR STAY WITH US A UNIQUE AND UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE, MOST ROYAL HIGHNESS.

KING CONAN... OUR SON... AQUILONIA'S FUTURE PRINCE...

...PEPIN.

CHARMED, I'M SURE.

CROM'S BONES, IS HE MAN OR MAID? SHALL I SUFFER SUCH A POP AS MY SON BY MARRIAGE--?!

YOU ARE THE *PRINCESS RADEGUND*, MY WIFE-TO-BE, I ASSUME?

DON'T STAND UNDER MY HORSE'S *SNOUT* SO, HE DOESN'T LIKE--

WHINH

OH, MITRA'S GOLDEN ROBES!

NOOOOOOOO

PEPIN! OH! MY POOR CHILD!

SPLAASH

MOTHER! THE WATER'S SO COLD!

GET *OUT* OF THERE!

FISH THE LAD OUT, LEONIDAS.

A THOUSAND APOLOGIES, KING CONAN. THE BOY'S *ENTHUSIASM*--

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

ENOUGH, DRAGONS. OUR DUTY'S TO GUARD SOVEREIGN AND PRINCESS, *NOT* TO STAND ABOUT CHATTERING LIKE MAGPIES.

NOW *THERE'S* A CHANGE FROM THE ALL-TOO-MELANCHOLY CONAN WE'VE SEEN SINCE THE PRINCE'S DEATH *

HO, MALORIC, LET YOUR WIFE SERVE HERBS AND TEAS TO THE WOMENFOLK--

--I'LL QUAFF YOUR *WINECELLAR* DRY!

*ISSUE # 20-- CWS.

WOULD YOU *DISMOUNT*, PRINCESS?

AYE, SIR, IF YOU'LL LEND A STONG HAND.

MOST GLADLY, MILADY.

MOST GLADLY.

LONG LIVE THE KING!

MEANWHILE, BACK IN TARANTIA...

THUD

HO, PROSPERO! HOW FARE'S THE COURT?

IT'S GOOD TO BE THE KING, LYSANDER. NOT THAT I LONG FOR A THRONE OF MY OWN...

...BUT ON THESE RARE OCCASIONS WHEN CONAN AND TROCERO LEAVE ME TO MY OWN DEVICES I DO MANAGE TO AMUSE MYSELF

AND YOU, SIR? HOW FARES AQUILONIA'S REIGNING MARTYR?

I THINK YOU KNOW

AH, YES... THE VACANCY IN THE GUARD CAPTAIN'S POST

AS THE LONE SURVIVOR OF THE GUNDERLAND MASSACRE THAT KILLED PRINCE CONN, YOU OF COURSE FEEL WE ALL OWE YOU SOMETHING.

PERHAPS WE DO.

YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS, AREN'T YOU?

LIFE IS *FULL* OF *HIDDEN PLEASURES*, LYSANDER. THE SECRET IS KNOWING HOW TO *TAP* THEM

THE LAD ANDREUS WILL BE THE NEW CAPTAIN

I'M AFRA- ? YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND SOME OTHER MEANS OF OCCUPYING YOUR *CONSIDERABLE* FREE TIME.

THWUP

LATER THAT AFTERNOON, AN INN OFF A BACK ROAD OF CANTRIUM

BUT WHAT OF THE DEADLY *WIZARD* WHO IS SAID TO HAUNT MALORIC'S CASTLE?

MALORIC HAS MANAGED TO SEND THE WIZARD OFF ON SOME MEANINGLESS ERRAND. HE'S DOUBTLESSLY FRIGHTENED OF HIS *OWN MAGE*.

NO MATTER

WIZARD OR NO, MALORIC'S PAID US FAIRLY TO SEE TO CONAN'S DEATH HE'S TIRED OF HIS MAGE'S APPARENT *UNWILLINGNESS* TO DO THE DEED.

WE STRIKE TONIGHT

WE, OF COURSE, HAVE NO SUCH QUALMS, EH, BROTHERS...?

LATER, THE KING'S CASTLE IN TARANTIA...

NO, THIS SPELL WON'T DO EITHER, YOUR MAJESTY-- IT'S FOR ANIMALS TURNED TO HUMAN FORM

I SIMPLY CANNOT FATHOM WHAT GRIMOIRE THE WITCH ZANDRA USED TO TRANS-FORM OUR PRINCE.*

WELL FIND ANOTHER BOOK OF CHARMS THEN, YOU FOOL WIZARD!

HOW LONG MUST I HOBBLE ON THIS FREAKISH GOAT'S FOOT?

MIND YOUR TONGUE, TAURUS.

* LAST ISH-- OWS

DEXITHEUS HAS GONE SLEEPLESS FOR DAYS SEEKING A COUNTER-SPELL FOR YOU.

SO?! AND DO YOU SUPPOSE I'VE SLEPT AT ALL SINCE THIS HAIRY HOOF'S DISFIGURED ME?!

A GOOD DAY TO YOU, MY PRINCE.

IF MY FATHER HAD NOT INTERFERED WITH ZANDRA'S MAGIC THIS WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED!

OUT OF MY WAY, USELESS WRETCH!

TAURUS I'LL NOT HAVE YOU ACTING LIKE—

LYSANDER!

PLEASE EXCUSE MY SON--HE IS NOT WELL.

NOTHING A GOOD *THROTTLING* WOULDN'T CURE

YOU SENT FOR ME, O QUEEN?

MOST CERTAINLY, BRAVE FELLOW

DEXITHEUS, I SHALL BE--

NO, THIS SPELL'S FOR WINNING LOVERS, AND HERE'S ONE TO TORTURE HATED FOES, AND

COME LYSANDER, LET US ENJOY THE SWEET SCENTS OF THE GARDEN BELOW

NAY, COUNCILOR, YOU MISS THE POINT.

I NEVER *ASKED* FOR YOUR OPIN ON

HUMPH! KING PROSPERO!

KING PROSPERO? I THINK *NOT.*

TELL ME *AGAIN,* LYSANDER

MY QUEEN .. MUST YOU *TORTURE* YOURSELF WITH THE TALE OF CONN'S DEATH OVER AND OVER AGAIN?

YOUR LOSS .. MY *FAILURE*, IS A BITTER MEMORY INDEED

THE MEMORY. YOUR MEMORIES .. ARE ALL THAT'S *LEFT* ME GOOD KNIGHT. TELL ME *AGAIN.*

THEY DESCENDED UPON US LIKE WOLVES, OUT IN THE JUNGLES OF GLINDERLAND; ATTACKING AFTER SOME FORM OF BLACK SORCERY BLOCKED OUT THE NOON SUN.

WE FOUGHT AS BEST WE COULD AGAINST THE GIBBERING DEVILS CONN LEADING US, NOT SO MUCH A *BOY*...

.. AS THE YOUTHFUL INCARNATION OF HIS *SIRE*, MY QUEEN, I'D SWEAR CONAN HIMSELF WERE WITH US.

STILL, *WERE* THE KING HIMSELF THERE, HE TOO WOULD BE LYING IN SOME NAMELESS GLINDERLAND BOG.

THEIR NUMBERS PRESSED UPON US

THE PRINCE FELL UPON A HEAP OF MANGLED CORPSES.

WOULD THAT I'D HAVE DIED WITH HIM.

ENOUGH, MY LADY I'VE HAD FAR TOO MUCH GLOOM FOR ONE DAY.

GLOOM ? AREN'T YOU WELL CARED-FOR HERE IN THE COURT ?

TOO WELL CARED-FOR I AM A SOLDIER. NOW, WITHOUT RANK OR STANDING, I HAVEN'T EVEN A UNIFORM

PALLANTIDES HAS NOT REPLACED YOU AMONG CONAN'S LEGIONNAIRES ?

PALLANTIDES DOESN'T KNOW I EXIST, QUEEN ZENOBIA - ELSE I'D HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE RECENT VACANT CAPTAINCY.

AND YOU WERE NOT . ?

I SEE.

. AND FOR THAT YOU SHALL EVER HOLD A SPECIAL PLACE IN YOUR QUEEN'S HEART.

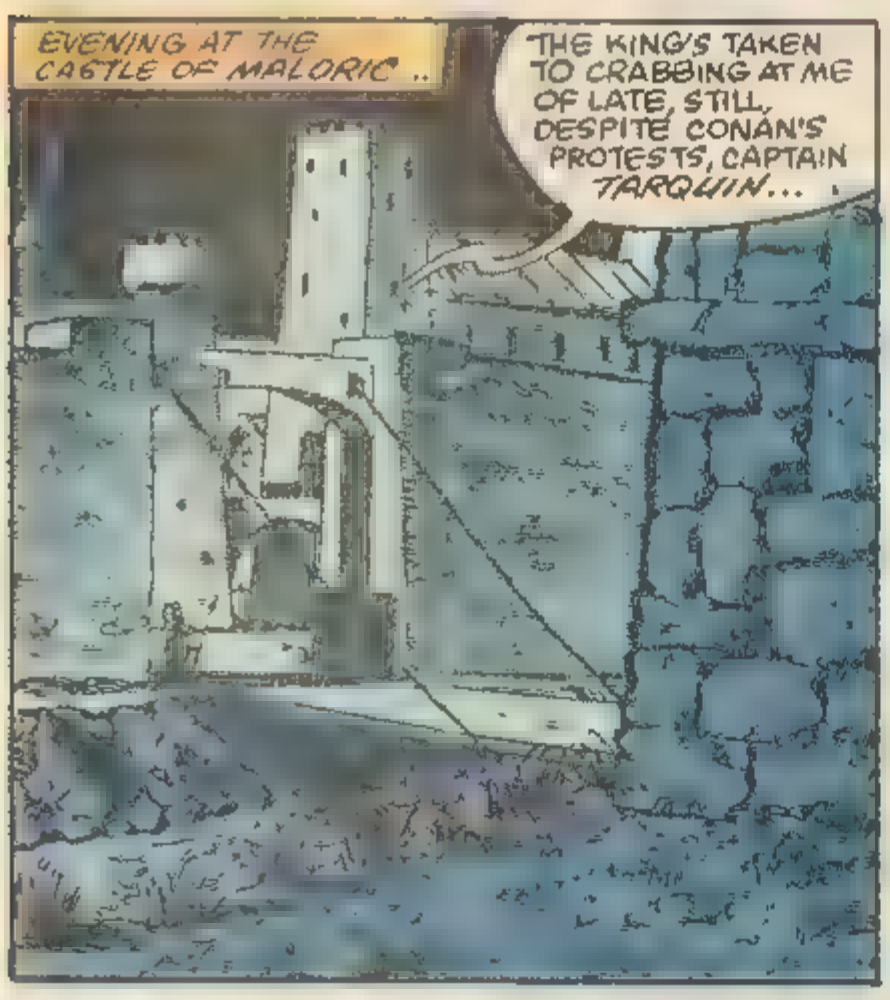
I WILL DEAL WITH THIS OVERSIGHT

" LIFE IS FULL OF HIDDEN PLEASURES, LYSANDER."

KNOW THIS, LYSANDER... YOU ARE THE LAST TO HAVE HEARD MY SON SPEAK...

"THE SECRET IS KNOWING HOW TO TAP THEM."

SO, WHILE FATHER'S AWAY...


EVENING AT THE CASTLE OF MALORIC ..
THE KING'S TAKEN TO CRABBING AT ME OF LATE, STILL, DESPITE CONAN'S PROTESTS, CAPTAIN TARQUIN...

..YOU'LL POST YOURSELF WITHIN HIS CHAMBERS ONCE HE SLEEPS
LEONIDAS WILL GUARD THE PRINCESS'S DOOR, WHILE HROLF AND SYAN-LIN MAKE THE CASTLE'S ROUNDS,

TARQUIN ?
HOLD, BOY! I'VE NOT DISMISSED YOU
WHAT MADNESS IS THIS YOU PRACTICE, PLAYING RADEGUND'S CHIVALROUS KNIGHT? DO YOU THINK ME DEAF AND BLIND TO YOUR WHISPERINGS AND AMOROUS GLANCES?

I'LL HAVE AN END TO THIS CHILDISH ROMANCING.

BY YMIR, LAD, OUR DRAGON UNIFORM'S A *HANDSOME* ONE AND WILL TURN ANY DAMSEL'S HEAD. OUR PRINCESS IS NO EXCEPTION

TRUST ME, THE *UNIFORM* ATTRACTS HER PASSION, NOT THE *MAN* INSIDE

ENOUGH SYAN-LIN AND HROLF TO YOUR ROUNDS.

YOU'LL TAKE THE KING'S CHAMBER TONIGHT, BOY, I'LL SEE TO RADEGUND'S

MIDNIGHT THE POSTERN GATE OF THE CASTLE.

STIK STIK STIK

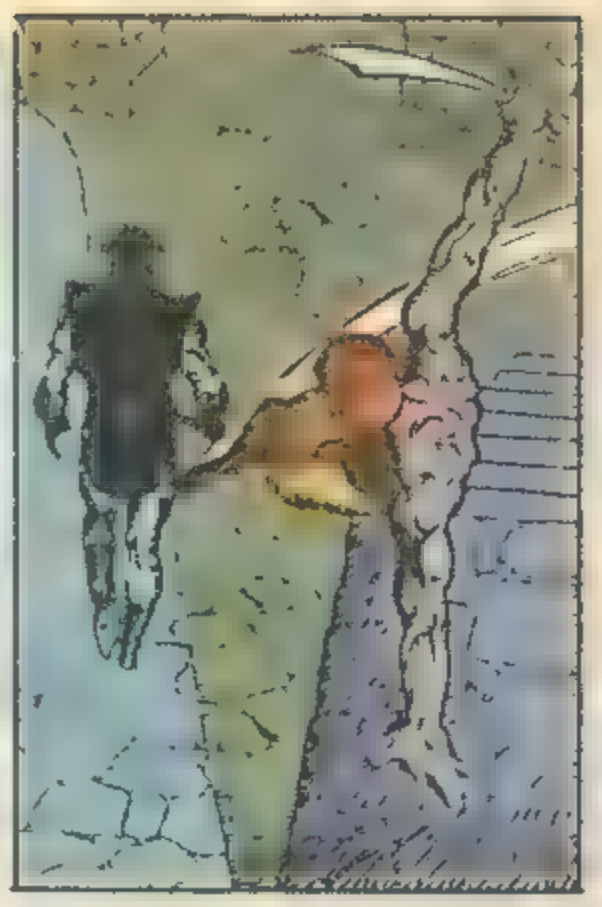
AS EASY A TASK AS MALORIC SWORE.

SWIFTLY NOW, BRETHREN... TO THE *KING'S CHAMBER!*

BY SET...!

YOU ARE THE *BLACK DRAGON* CALLED SYAN-LIN...?

YAAAAGUH



LIRK!

MY THANKS, SYAN-LIN!

THOSE WERE NO ORDINARY ASSASSINS TO HAVE MASKED THEIR PRESENCE FROM MY SENSES BY YMIR IF THEY COULD HAVE PASSED ME...

UP AHEAD..

THE CAPTAIN!

WELL?! DON'T JUST STAND THERE.!

HO! WE'LL EVEN THE ODDS...!

AND THEN SOME!

MEAN-WHILE, WITHIN CONAN'S CHAMBER

AN EMPTY BED..?

CAPTAIN... WHILE WE ARE DELAYED HERE .. WHAT OF LEONIDAS, AND THE *KING*?!

CONAN WAS WEANED IN THE *BARBARIC NORTH* WHERE TO HIM WE ARE LITTLE MORE THAN *STRATEGIC FIGUREHEADS*

THE *BOY'S* WELFARE CONCERNS ME MORE

TAKE OFF YOUR HELMET.

I WANT YOUR HEAD TO ROLL *SMOOTHLY* WHEN I LOP IT OFF.

NO MY LORD, YOU MISJUDGE-- 'TWAS *TROCERO'S* ORDERS THAT I--

TROCERO'S BEEN MY GOOD RIGHT ARM FOR A SCORE OF SUMMERS' DRAGON. WHY SHOULD HE SUDDENLY BEGIN *CODDLING* ME NOW?!

T...TROCERO HAS *ALWAYS* INSISTED THE DRAGONS SECRETLY WATCH OVER YOU, SIRE. WE'VE CLUNG TO THE SHADOWS

CROM!

ASSASSINS!

I'LL DEFEND YOU MY LIEGE--

SO I SEE

SMD

FINALLY, AFTER ALL THE *PAMPERING* AND THE *BOWING* AND THE *DIPLOMACY*

THE THRICE-DAMNED *IDLE CHATTER* AND HAVING TO DINE WITH *BOTH FEET* ON THE *FLOOR*

TINK!

.FINALLY..

CROM'S GIVEN ME AN *ENEMY* TO *KILL*.'

YEARGH!

KING CONAN! WHAT'S HAPPENED?!

I GAVE THIS DOG A *PRIVATE* AUD'ENCE

MY LIEGE . I...I . WHAT PARDON MAY I BEG...? I SWEAR TO YOU, BY MITRA, *WE* WILL *FIND* THOSE RESPONSIBLE...

SO, *TROCERO*, YOU THINK THE OLD KING'S GOTTEN SO *SOFT* HE CAN NO LONGER PROTECT HIS *OWN BACK*?

AND WHAT *MEDDLESOME FOOL* IS THIS WE GARBED IN THE DRAGON'S UNIFORM? THE DOG TRIPS OVER HIS OWN FEET LIKE A *DRUNKARD* CHASED BY *THIEVES*--

THE ORDERS WERE *MINE*, YOUR HIGHNESS--

BUT THE *SHAME* IS MINE, COUNT

BY YOUR *LEAVE*, I GO TO *STRIP OFF* THIS UNIFORM, I AM NO LONGER *WORTHY* TO BE A DRAGON.

SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER...

I *SENSED* YOU'D BE HERE LEONIDAS

FOR THE LAST TIME I'M *LEAVING* THE COURT FOR A WHILE, PRINCESS

I'M A DRAGON NO LONGER AND BESIDES YOU ARE ENGAGED BY LAW

NO LAW CAN DICTATE TO MY *HEART*. I'LL FLEE THE KINGDOM BEFORE I WED A SELF-CENTERED NINNY LIKE PEPIN HOW.. HOW DO *YOU* FEEL..?

LIKE A DROWNING PUP.

I'M *AFRAID*, RADEGUND... AND ASHAMED. THE INDIGNITY I'VE BROUGHT ON MY *FATHER*...

HUSH, LEONIDAS. YOUR *FATHER* HAS BEEN A TRUSTED AND RESPECTED MEMBER OF MY FATHER'S COURT LONGER THAN EITHER OF US HAS LIVED...

BUT, IF YOU *MUST* GO

LEAVE ME SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY...

Alan Zelenetz
SCRIPT

Marc Silvestri
BREAKDOWNS

Geof Isherwood
FINISHES

Richard Parker
LETTERER

[illegible] Kotzky

Jim Owsley
EDITOR

Larry Hama
SENIOR EDITOR

Jim Shooter
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Having narrowly escaped the hangman's noose in the Nemedian capital city Numalia, Prince Conan II, firstborn of Aquilonia's king, was transported to the woods of Tarantia by way of the witch Zandra's magic. Conn was nearly reunited with his father when the witch struck again, this time aided by Conn's evil brother Prince Taurus, sending the prince thousands of leagues east to fabled Khitai . . .

By Alan Zelenetz
and Marc Silvestri

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

CONAN®

SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING

IN THE FOOTHILLS ALONG LANTSANG IN FAR-EASTERN KHITAI

A LOST PRINCE FROM A DISTANT WESTERN LAND STANDS.

AND SIGHS A LONG AND BITTER SIGH AS HE GAZES ON THE COUNTRYSIDE LIKE A STRANGE AND BEAUTIFUL PRISON HE KNOWS IS NOT HIS OWN.

SUDDENLY--

WHAT?

THAT'S MUFFLED LAUGHTER!

LETTERED BY RICHARD PARKER COLORED BY GEORGE ROUSSOS EDITED BY JIM OWSLEY

MITRA! SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

THEY'VE SEEN ME!

NO! I'M NO ENEMY--

I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOUR LANGUAGE, BUT LOOK-- I'M UNARMED

COME ON, GIRL-- CONVINCE HIM I'M NO FOE.

AND NOW MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME WHERE I AM...

...THOUGH I MIGHT GUESS FROM YOUR APPEARANCES, *EAST* OF THE *VILAYET*, THAT'S FOR CERTAIN.

AND I'VE HEFTED SWORDS LIKE THE ONE *HE* WEARS.

FATHER HAD THEM FROM *KHITAI*--

KHITAI! *KHITAI!*

KHITAI, THEN...THOUSANDS OF LEAGUES FROM AQUILONIA...WELL, AT LEAST IT'S A START.

FRIENDS? YES, YES. FRIENDS.

I AM *CONN*, YOUR *FRIEND*.

MITRA, THAT'S GOOD!

ESPECIALLY AFTER THE FOUL WATER CRAWLING WITH BUGS THEY THEY LADELED ME IN THAT GODFORSAKEN NEMEDIAN DUNGEON THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE SOMETHING SOLID TO PUT IN HERE?

MY STOMACH'S GROWLING LIKE A PRIDE OF SHEMITE LIONS.

YES, I SEE -- POMEGRANATE TREES ACROSS THE BRIDGE

I'D PREFER A HAUNCH OF *MUTTON* * RIGHT NOW...

* SHEEP --OWS

..BUT FOOD IS *FOOD.*

WHY AM I BABBLING SO? THE TWO OF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD OF AQUILONIAN...

"... AND MY OLD COURT TUTOR *GUIGEMAR* NEVER TAUGHT ME *YOUR* TONGUE.

IT'S JUST BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE HAD A FRIENDLY EAR TO BEND--

--OR ONE SO BEAUTIFUL...

WHAT--?!

WHO--

--THEY'RE ALL DRESSED IN RED LIKE YOU, GIRL?

NOW, COMING FROM THE OTHER END--!

CLAD IN WHITE?

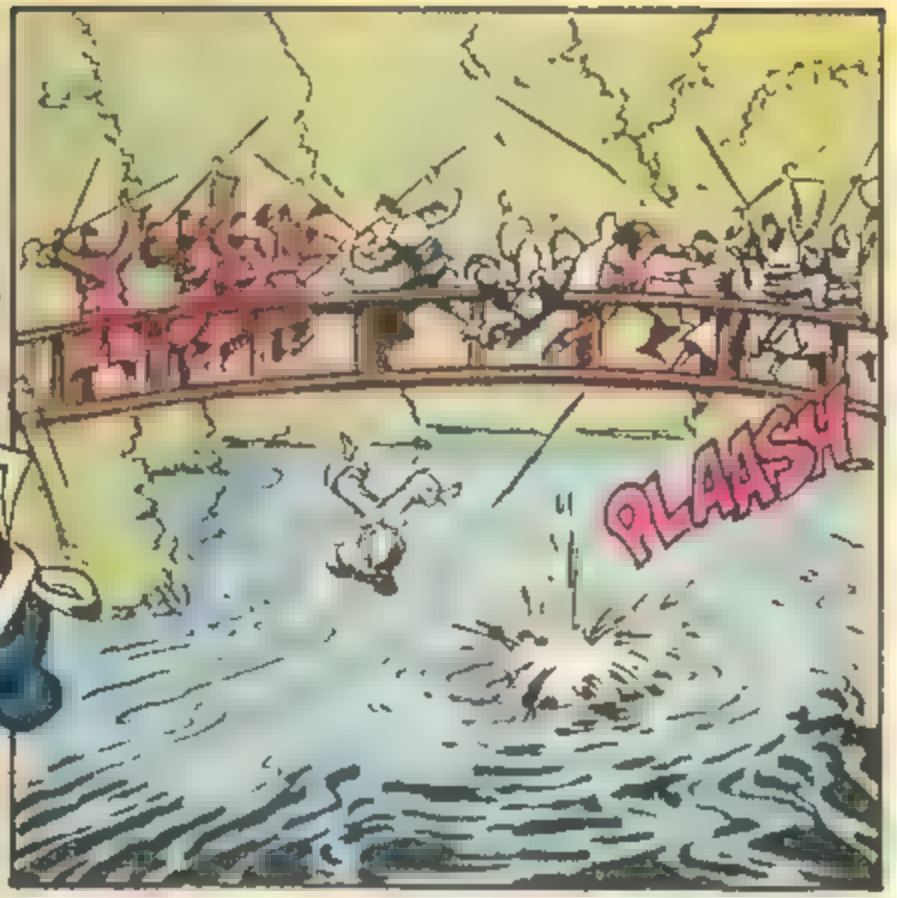
THAT'S WHY YOU WERE HIDING IN THE WOODS.

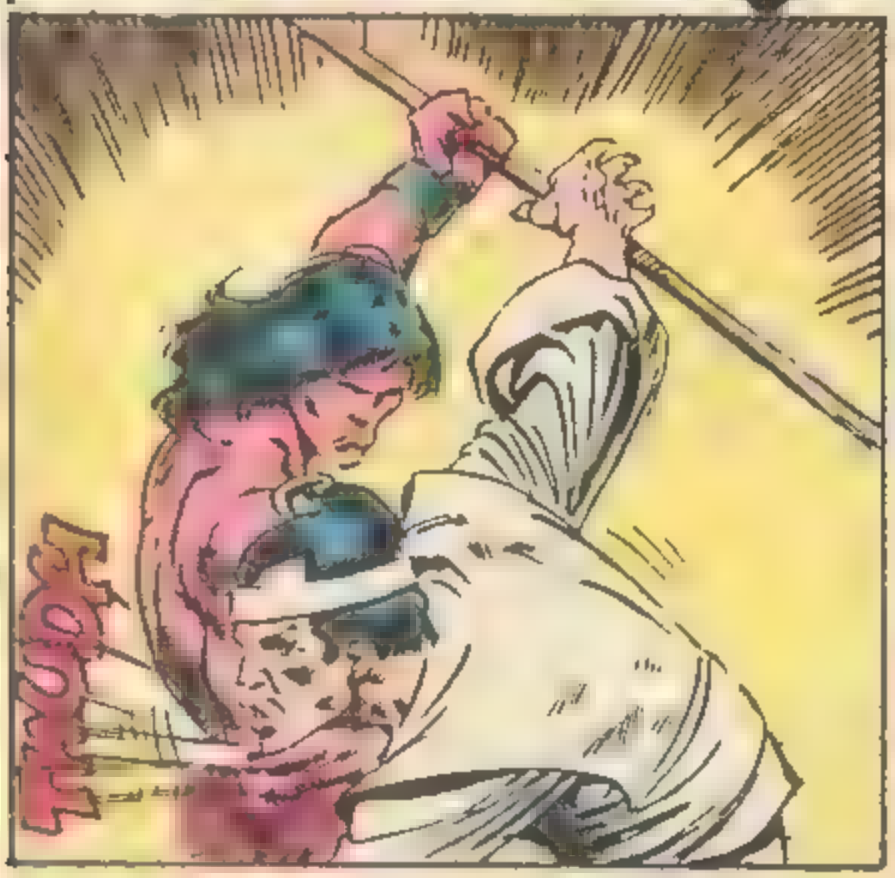
YOUR FAMILIES ARE *RIVALS*--?

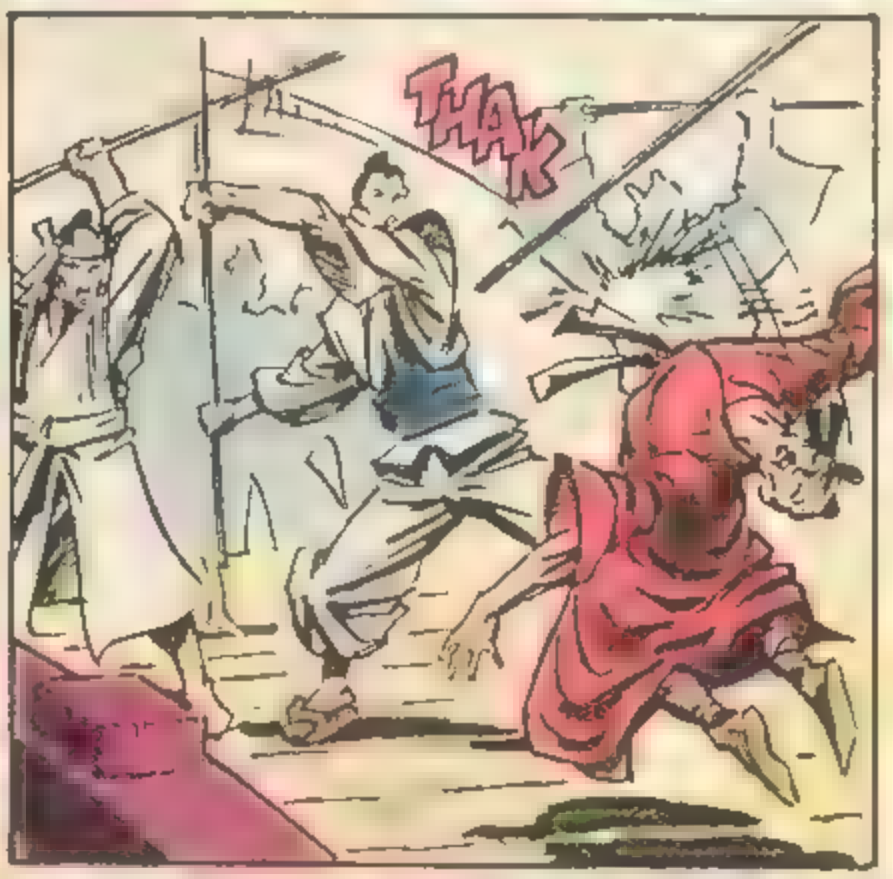
BLAST! MY EMPTY BELLY LED YOU INTO THIS TRAP--

--MY *FULL FISTS* WILL MAKE AMENDS!

THUUG


PLAASH


THUNK


THAK

THUNK

SPLAASH
6

THE GIRL--?!

UNHAND HER!

THWAK

THRAAK

BOLD WARRIORS-- BUT I LEARNED TO WIELD A STAFF FROM...

MY FATHER...

NOW WHERE'S--

" NO! YOUR RED-CLAD KINSMEN HAVE CAPTURED HIM.

"COME, WE'LL FOLLOW, I OWE HIM A KINDNESS--"

--AND MY WORD ON IT, GIRL, I'LL SET YOUR LOVER... FREE

WHERE--?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN THERE?

MITRA! THESE ARE STRANGE WAYS --SHE THINKS... YOU DON'T OWE ME SERVITUDE FOR YOUR RESCUE -- BUT SHE'S IGNORING HIS CAPTURE..

NO. HE GAVE ME HIS HAND IN FRIENDSHIP.. I CAN'T--

COME ON, GIRL, BEFORE WE LOSE THEM.

NIGHT..

IT'S QUIETER THAN A STYGIAN TOMB IN THE VILLAGE NOW.

WE'RE GOING DOWN.

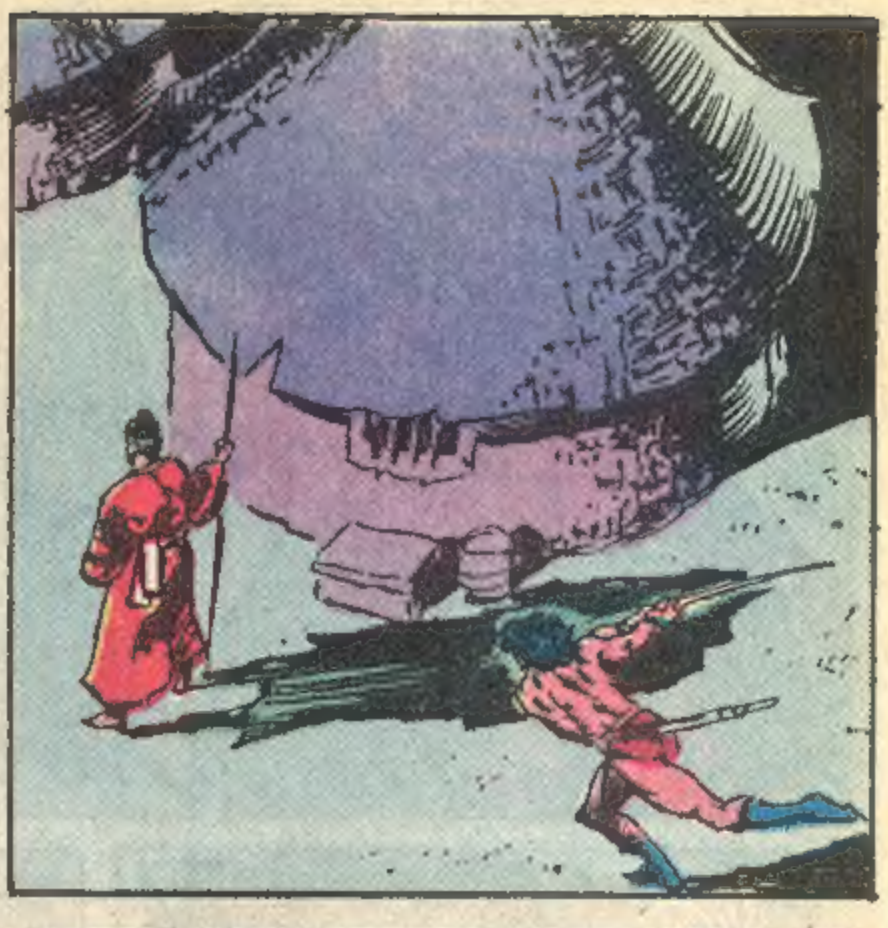
YOU'RE AFRAID TO BE SEEN BY YOUR *OWN CLANSMEN* AREN'T YOU?

I UNDERSTAND

HERE LIE DOWN AND REST YOUR HEAD UNTIL I RETURN YOU MUST BE TIRED

NO NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT

MITRA...



THUMP!

FRIEND.

AND...

WAKE UP.

LOOK--HE'S SAFE. JUST AS I PROMISED.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, GIRL?

THIS MORNING YOU TWO WERE MAKING LOVE TO EACH OTHER...

...NOW YOU TURN YOUR EYES FROM THE VERY SIGHT...

SKLIIT

... OF HIM--?

WHAT MADNESS--?

NO, NO MADNESS, I THINK-- ONLY SHAME...

...AND HONOR REDEEMED...

DAWN...

STOP WALKING BEHIND ME LIKE SOME TIMID SLAVE, WILL YOU? STAY AT MY SIDE. YOU KNOW, MY FATHER ONCE PASSED THROUGH KHITAI TO SAVE MY MOTHER FROM A WIZARD'S...

WHY AM I TELLING YOU THIS? YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND A WORD.

WAIT! PAIKANG! MY FATHER MADE FRIENDS IN THAT CITY-STATE--

PAIKANG! PAIKANG!

THE DAYS PASS...

I SEEK ONE NAMED KANG HSIN.

HIS DAUGHTER KANG LOU-DZE?

KANG HSIN?

KANG LOU-DZE.

NOK NOK

OPEN UP THERE--I'M THE SON OF KING CONAN.

MOTHER OF MITRA! YOU'RE...

MY VERY TWIN--!!

TO BE CONCLUDED!

KING CONAN

℅ MARVEL COMICS GROUP
387 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

JIM OWSLEY
EDITOR

We like to get your letters. But if you don't want your full address published, please tell us.

Dear Marvel,

Magnificent. That's the word you can tell Alan Zelenetz, Marc Silvestri, and the rest of the Marvel staff who put together CONAN THE KING #23.

Mike Bargstadt
410 S. Cedar
Hartington, NE 68739

Dear Barbarians,

CONAN THE KING #23, "Ordeal" was simply ... superb, ingenious, exciting, nerve-wracking, etc. I paid a dollar for this comic, but I'd be willing to pay twenty dollars for it!!! Keep up the great work! I really mean it!

Kevin The Lobster Lover
Paoli, PA

Note to Jim Shooter, Editor in Chief and incredibly-gifted-yet-unbelievably-modest craftsman behind MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS: Say Jim, if we successfully hike CONAN THE KING's cover price, oh, say 2000% or so, think we might be able to get a raise? Uh ... Jim ... ?

Dear Alan, Marc, and Geof,

Although I complained about CONAN THE KING #20, I really like what you guys are doing on the book. From a distance, the cover of issue #23 looked like a big mess on the rack. So I looked at it closer. It still looked like a mess.

Marc and Geof produce together the best art I've ever seen in this comic, except maybe Marc inking his own stuff. I would never have expected Conan to react the way he has to Conn's "death." Conan the Tyrant. Neat stuff. Keep it up.

Russ Cleverley
38 Ireland Drive
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

By now, Russ, you've seen that Conan is finally past his period of mourning his son's loss. He should come across considerably less tyrannical in coming issues.

Greetings, Cimmerians,

I have been avidly enjoying CONAN THE KING and I have one burning question: are you making a new comic book called CONAN: SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING? If you do, I'd be upset.

Anika Gael
409 West Vine
Oxford, OH 45056

Our six-part series "CONAN: SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING" has been extremely well-received, Anika, but as you can see at the bottom of this page, even the best things in life must come to an end. And what an end! Whatever you do, don't miss next issue!

Dear Alan,

Hi. CONAN THE KING #23 was superb! The cover was a conglomeration of images — beautiful and confusing, but definitely awesome! Silvestri / Isherwood ... wow! Where have you been hiding this team? Or is it I've just begun to notice it's not Big John. Buscema drawing this book? I never thought anyone could handle Conan without losing his coarse, fierce nature in the drawings. I was happily quite wrong! This art team knocks my socks off! Conan has never been so fierce! The story is excellent, full of action, intrigue, sub-plots, and the ever-present feeling of dread. And with your second feature starring Prince Conn, I'd gladly pay two dollars for this comic! Honestly! You really, really know how to give a fan his money's worth! I can't help but to stay ...

Your friend,
Todd "CK" Freeman
Box 1000
TJ Air Base, Spain
APO NY 09283

Y'know, all of the readers writing in offering to pay more money for CONAN THE KING gives us an idea. We've wanted a company limo for a long time ...

Dear Jim,

CONAN THE KING #23 was excellent. The artwork was much improved and the story was good, too. I'm also happy to say that it's fine with me that CONAN THE KING is bimonthly. I remember when it was quarterly. It's worth the extra time to read a good story. Keep up the good work.

Rick Nickles
104 Joann
Whiteoak, TX 75693

Dear Kingly Crew,

It's a good thing that I'm not nearly as depressed today as I was yesterday, because reading #23 might have done terrible things to the darkness of my mood. You see, I'm facing something of a personal crisis of a long-term nature, just as Conan is — though I guess in most ways it's not nearly as bad as apparently losing one's son. In any event, if I was looking for guidance on how to deal, in broad terms, with a crisis, I certainly wouldn't look here, except maybe as a How Not To guide.

It's amazing to watch Conan make almost all the wrong moves. But it is interesting and dramatically welcome as well. Conan never has been a big intellectual, to put it mildly. His successes have come primarily from three sources: (1) His tremendous physical prowess, (2) A basic soundness of personal philosophy and strength of character, and (3) Being an excellent tactician, i.e. being able to solve immediate problems, especially military-like ones. But now, the first and the third of the above traits are of no use to him and, more importantly, the second one is failing him. His personal philosophy and character have lead him to an almost instinctive way of acting, but because he doesn't know the facts here and because his great personal grief is warping his personality, his instincts are not only failing to direct him, they are misdirecting him. We are seeing the disintegration of Conan's way of conducting his life. Is this process irreversible? No. And for two reasons: (1) That very strength of character will not allow Conan to lose all touch with reality, as witness his rescue of Aemilius this issue and (2) Now, as never before in his life, Conan has a large circle of loved ones, friends, and good advisors.

As for the Conn backup: Please don't let this degenerate into Conan-like stories. This issue we see Conn starting a career as a thief. We can get our fill of thief stories in Conan's other adventures. Unless there is something about this story that will make it one that could only happen to Conn, not Conan.

Yours truly,
"T.M. Maple"
Ontario, Canada

NEXT ISSUE: Get ready, Trocero quits. Conan recruits a new Black Dragon. And, in the awesome conclusion to our much-talked about series CONAN: SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING, Conn is faced with a spectre from the past and comes to a decision that will change his life forever. Trust us; you don't want to miss this one, folks. After all ... nobody else will.

THE PRINCE IS YET STILL DEAD

I picked up **Mark Silvestri** and wife **Victoria** at their swank Madison Avenue hotel in the worst rain storm New York's had all year. They piled into my Cougar and off we went through the rain-slick streets. It was **Marc's** first time in New York. But he didn't care. Nothing mattered. Dripping wet he turned to me in the car, and over the cacophonous din of Culture Club's "*Miss Me Blind*" blaring away on FM, **Marc** asked — "*Jim ... do we have to do it?*" I kept driving.

Dinner at Beni Hana was wonderful. Japanese chefs twirled knives and sauteed exotic dishes right before our eyes. **Marc** still didn't care. I was having trouble with my chopsticks and had managed to shove several shrimp into my left ear when **Marc** asked again, "*C'mon, Jim ... do we hafta? Huh?*" I couldn't hear him through the shrimp.

"A Chorus Line" is the longest running show on Broadway, and now I know why. The show was wonderful, the dancing dazzling, and except for the one shrimp I couldn't manage to get out of my ear, things went fine. But **Marc** wasn't happy. We ended up at Richoux's about midnight, and the rain was just lurching to a drippy halt. We had the best apple pie a la mode mom (yours, mine, or **Jim Shooter's**) ever baked. **Marc** wasn't happy. He excused himself and went off somewhere to cry. I couldn't understand it.

Then **Victoria** leaned across the table, removed the shrimp, and told me: **Marc** just can't do it. It hurts too much. I told her he'd better do it or he'd be fired. She put the shrimp back.

Of course, we were talking about next issue's dramatic conclusion to **CONAN: SON OF THE BARBARIAN KING**. Okay, look ... I'll give it away. It's the end of Prince Conn. No lie. Now, as to what I mean by this, and why it upset **Marc** so much and made him so unhappy ... well, you'll just have to buy next issue, now won't you.

Oh, incidentlly, it's weeks now since **Marc's** left. I gave the bill for the evening to **Jim Shooter**. Now *he* isn't happy ...

Jim Owsley